



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the arrest and transfer of Thomas Lubanga**

The European Union welcomes the surrender of Thomas Lubanga Dyilo by the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Congo and his transfer by France to the International Criminal Court on 17 March 2006. Mr. Lubanga is alleged to have committed war crimes, namely enlisting and conscripting children as child soldiers and using them to actively participate in hostilities. He is the first suspect to have been arrested and transferred to the International Criminal Court in order to stand trial in The Hague.

This arrest constitutes an important achievement in the fight against impunity in the Great Lakes region, with a view to enhancing long-term stability in the region. Furthermore, this arrest is evidence of the international community's commitment and support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its citizens in their efforts towards peace and reconciliation. In this regard the EU welcomes the fact that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is preparing for its first democratic election in forty years.

P R E S S

The arrest and transfer of Mr. Lubanga proves that the International Criminal Court is fully operational. The EU is confident that the International Criminal Court will function as a deterrent and means of conflict resolution with the support of the international community.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
